

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	23/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC040631
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Surrey County Council
Registered person address	Surrey County Council, Children's & Safeguarding Service, Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road, ADDLESTONE, Surrey, KT15 2EP

Responsible individual	Ian Forbes
Registered manager	Terence Brooks
Inspector	Kevin Whatley

Inspection date	23/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC040631

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Placement stability is a core strength of the home and one which allows young people time to settle, grow and develop. This is particularly important in preparing them for the next stages of their lives.
- Young people benefit from being looked after by a stable team of experienced staff who want the best for them. This enables meaningful relationships to develop and prosper.
- A cohesive approach ensures the physical, educational, behavioural and emotional needs of young people are met.
- The quality of relationships between staff and young people is a strength of the home. Staff provide a good balance between consistent boundaries reminding young people of the expectations of the home and nurturing them.
- A highly experienced management team provides effective leadership which focuses on meeting the individual needs of young people. This results in a home that is relaxed and settled.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12 The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to young people leaving the home without permission, the registered provider must: (2) (vi) ensure staff take effective and consistent action any time there is a serious concern about a young person's welfare.	30/01/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person should make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to evaluate the quality of care being provided including the progress made by young people. (The Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, page 54 paragraph 10.24)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is run and managed by the local authority. The home offers care and accommodation for up to eight young people who have emotional and, or behavioural issues.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
13/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
11/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
04/11/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
The support, guidance and understanding shown to young people has allowed them to explore their difficult and self-destructive feelings and behaviours safely. As a result young people have improved their levels of self-esteem and confidence and can reflect on the journeys they have made. In doing so they have gained invaluable insight into their own vulnerabilities and the impact their previous experiences has had on them. Such an approach increases the chances of young people making successful transitions into adulthood. Young people make good progress. In a number of instances such progress is excellent given their starting points. For example, in significantly reducing their challenging behaviours and being able to settle and live in the home for many years. Such stability allows young people time to explore their issues in a safe and supportive environment and in turn develop their personal, social and educational learning. Young people say, 'I have changed so much since being here...I used to be a nightmare but now I am ready to move into independent living'. Relationships between young people and those who care for them are strong and meaningful. The atmosphere of the home is relaxed with mutual respect and understanding permeating the culture. When issues arise staff remind young	

people of how to behave and are mindful to help them resolve their differences in the best way possible. For instance by allowing time and space and facilitating appropriate discussions and resolutions. The behaviour of young people toward staff and each other is generally very good which results in a home that feels safe and caring.

The day to day experiences of young people are extremely good. Staff display confidence, knowledge and understand of the specific needs of young people, both as individuals and as a living group. For example handover meetings take place each day between staff going off and coming on shift. These meetings keep staff up to date with events with the emotional well-being of each young person the primary concern. This means young people receive consistent messages that they are treated the same in an atmosphere where effort and honesty is promoted and respected.

Young people live in a home where they have a voice. Regular house meetings ensure they can directly influence the running of the home such as contributing to menu planning and considering holiday trips. The atmosphere is open and inclusive with young people saying, 'we get listened to'. This approach enables young people to feel a part of the home and in doing so they invest and engage.

A clear process ensures young people understand how to complain. Details are contained within the young person's guide. Young people say they know how to complain and noted, 'we are always asked how we are getting on'. This coupled with house meetings, key-work sessions and the availability of advocacy services provides them with considerable opportunities to express how they feel. The large number of avenues available to young people and the quality of open communication in the home are borne out by the fact that no complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Care planning takes account of the individual needs of young people. Assessments ensure their physical, behavioural, social and emotional needs are considered. Plans incorporate expert health, education and psychological advice and guidance which take account of the complex needs of young people. Staff follow plans in practice with regular reviews evaluating their effectiveness and impact. Young people attend their reviews and contribute well. This ensures they are included in the decisions which affect them.

Young people have their physical and medical health care needs met well. Plans highlight the specific areas of need. This ensures staff are aware of the physical and medical needs of young people with the role of the key-worker central to overseeing its implementation. For example in taking a lead in ensuring all routine appointments are completed. They act as advocates for young people and encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles. As such they drive the progress that young people make in relation to their health.

The support provided to young people to improve their emotional health is very effective. Care staff work closely with specialist mental health professionals. They develop and implement effective strategies that improve the emotional well-being of each young person. This has led to a reduction in crisis behaviours, self-harm and violence. When young people are distressed staff intervene sensitively and empathetically to help them cope. Young people recognise they are valued by staff and become more emotionally resilient and in turn develop a more positive self-view.

Young people are able to keep in touch with those who are important to them. Contact arrangements are confirmed at the point of admission to ensure any restrictions are known and planned for. Young people can easily contact family and friends via the homes telephones; all young people also have personal mobiles. Young people also maintain appropriate friendships in the local community. This helps to integrate them into the area in which they live and experience life outside of residential care.

Young people receive good support and guidance to prepare them for the next stages of their lives. Alongside supporting and encouraging young people to experience and manage community situations, practical advice allows them to improve self-care skills including budgeting and shopping. Staff use the quality of relationships they share with young people to go with them and visit potential placements and meet the adults who will be supporting them once they leave. This results in young people being better prepared, reduces their anxieties and helps them process the significance of moving on into adulthood.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities which provide excitement, physical challenges and learning. Young people go on holidays both abroad and nearer to home. This includes relaxing breaks to the sun and adventure holidays that embrace the outdoors. Young people are encouraged to pursue particular interests, including football and diving. This allows them to engage in locally based clubs and participate in their community and in doing so improve feelings of self-esteem, confidence and belonging.

The home provides young people with a good standard of accommodation. A large living environment allows them the opportunity to find space should they wish. This includes choice of lounges and a large garden fitted with outdoor play equipment. The bedrooms provide suitable levels of comfort with young people personalising them to their liking. The admission process recognises the importance of individuality with young people able to choose the décor for their room at an early stage. Photographs of young people's involvement in group holidays provide nice touches. There is no damage or graffiti with the environment offering a homely feel throughout. Works to replace and modernise the bathrooms are currently taking place with young people excited about the imminent improvements.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe and say that they feel 'safe' in their home. A majority of them make good progress in reducing their challenging and risk taking behaviours. The level of progress for a number of young people is extremely good given their starting points when they arrived. A few incidents have taken place where young people have placed themselves at risk. Where this has occurred staff have responded well and have taken opportunities to share their concerns with young people and provide them with insight into their own vulnerabilities. In doing so staff have helped them take account of their lifestyles and ultimately reduce episodes of repetition. Recruitment procedures are fully adhered to help ensure young people do not come into contact with unsuitable adults. Safeguarding systems are strong. All staff receive training and guidance which ensures they understand how to respond appropriately to any allegations or disclosures. Staff and managers take prompt and effective action when concerns arise. The home liaise well with safeguarding agencies including the Local Authority Designated Officer and the police. This results in a cohesive response in managing risk and keeping young people safe. Young people report that they have at least one trusted adult in the home that they can talk to if they feel vulnerable or unsafe. Behaviour management focuses on addressing specific areas of concern with staff using the strength of relationships to help young people to behave appropriately. As a result the need to use physical restraint is low. Staff are good at undertaking direct work with young people so that they become better able to recognise risk. By challenging engrained patterns of behaviour, the staff help young people to be safer. For example in helping them to consider their own risks regarding exploitation and why some relationships outside of the home are not appropriate. This stimulates healthy debate, reminds young people of their own vulnerabilities and provides them with clear messages that they are cared for. In recent months there have been several occasions when young people have left the home without permission. In a vast majority of incidents staff follow agreed protocols and go out of their way to locate them. However in a few instances there was inconsistency in the timings of reporting young people to the police. In addition one care plan/risk assessments did not contain clear guidance as to when the police should be called. Such mixed responses are not in keeping with the otherwise robust approach and increases the chances of delays occurring.	

Sanctions are rarely used. Young people receive support to engage in restorative processes following incidents. For example, in being able to apologise to staff or each other. This is a positive way of helping young people to take responsibility without adopting a punitive approach. There are incentive and reward programmes which motivate young people to behave. Good use of rewards also helps young people to understand the benefits of courtesy and good manners. Staff are quick to recognise and praise improvements and progress. Such an approach helps to embed good behaviour which is predominantly the norm of everyday living in the home.

Because staff have high expectations of young people, for the most part the home is a settled, calm and nurturing environment. For example, young people rarely use inappropriate language and make a conscious effort not to swear. As young people develop improved social skills, and the ability to cope in group situations, their life chances are better. High expectations also generate a culture where bullying is understood by all to be unacceptable. Young people report that there is no bullying.

Young people live in an environment that is safe. Health and safety processes are robust. Young people and staff understand fire safety systems and how to respond if emergencies occur.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
An experienced management team run the home effectively and for the benefit of young people. The Registered Manager has been in post since 1992. He is a qualified social worker and holds a number of relevant qualifications including the level 4 management award in children and young people. He has a wealth of experience within residential settings which he uses well in creating a settled and caring home. The homes statement of purpose is up to date and provides a defined level of information that confirms the services on offer and how they work in practice. The aims and objectives of the home are met in practice. Comments from stakeholders including family members, social workers and independent reviewing officers were very complimentary. They say staff are, 'fantastic...caring and supportive of the needs of the young people'. They also note, '(name of young person) has made incredible progress since being here'.	

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and the areas to consolidate and improve upon. His routine monitoring takes account of how well the home is functioning. This enables him to highlight patterns and trends in the behaviour of young people and the practice of adults who care for them. Whilst providing a reasonable overview of events the current process does not utilise data to its fullest extent to evaluate the quality of care and the specific progress of young people. External monitoring visits provide a useful overview of the level of care provided and in essence the management team see their findings as a 'critical friend'.

Staff receive clear guidance and encouragement to meet the needs of young people to a high standard. Staff receive good training and regular supervision. Recent training has included child sexual exploitation and substance misuse. Staff say they receive extremely good support which culminates in raising expectations of practice and improving consistency. As a result young people are looked after by adults who are motivated and passionate about supporting them to learn and progress in all areas of their lives.

Committed staff provide young people with care and understanding and fully embrace the importance of developing purposeful relationships. Good numbers of them look after young people night and day. The stable and experienced team provide a good balance between imposing consistent boundaries, encouraging participation and delivering nurture and emotional warmth. Young people spoke most positively about staff, notably the support and guidance they receive. This they say has helped them, 'grow up' and make progress in their lives.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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